OP/ED
NASHVILLE BANNER 6/30/76
"Op-Ed," opposite the editorial page, includes opinions and contentious writings by people of all persuasions.

Kennedy Slaying Probe Needed

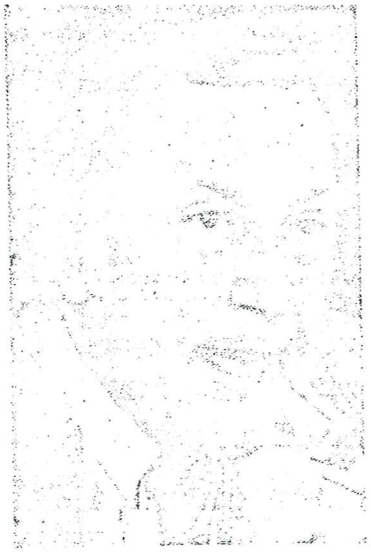
MAYBE AFTER nearly 13 years new trails will be pursued in the assassination of President Kennedy in Dallas.

It's high time the investigation be reopened — and the new Senate Permanent Committee on Intelligence Oversight appears to be the proper group to consider any new evidence in the Kennedy death.

THE NOW DEFUNCT Senate Intelligence Committee, in its final report released June 23, outlined several leads which it said were never adequately investigated.

One stands out above all others.

Shortly before midnight on Nov. 22, 1963 — only hours after the President was murdered on the streets of Dallas — a twin-engine plane silently touched down at Mexico City's Benito Juarez International Airport and dropped off a man.



SEN. RICHARD SCHWEIKER
'Interesting leads'

He hurried to a Cuban airliner which had been waiting five hours and boarded.

He did not pass through customs where he would have had to identify himself.

He sat in the cockpit, unnoticed by other passengers. The plane roared off for Havana.

Strange?

Well, the committee says this mystery man may have been the "Cuban Connection" in the President's death, and the CIA knew of his strange flight to Cuba — but never followed it up.

Also —

There were two other promising leads the report says were never followed up.

The day after the assassination a mysterious Cuban-American, possibly a Cuban agent, crossed the Texas border into Mexico at Laredo in a private auto.

He then took a regularly scheduled Cuban airlines flight to Havana using a Cuban "courtesy visa" and an expired U.S. passport.

The CIA was told by an informant that this Cuban-American was "involved in the assassination" and that on Sept. 17, 1963, he attended a meeting of the Tampa, Fla., Fair Play for Cuba Committee at a residence, the report said.

He was at the residence waiting for an "important" phone call from Cuba that would be his "go ahead order" to leave the United States and return to his native Cuba, according to the report.

Lee Harvey Oswald may have

been in contact with the committee in Tampa earlier in the year, the report declared.

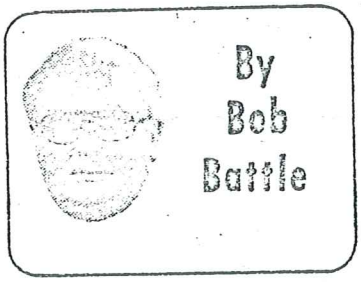
The Senate committee concluded:

"Thus, the suspicious travel of this individual, coupled with the possibility that Oswald had contacted the Tampa chapter, certainly should have prompted a far more thorough and timely investigation than the FBI conducted and the results should have been volunteered to the Warren Commission; regardless of its failure to request such information."

Another unfollowed lead, the report said, was the possibility that Castro ordered the assassination in retaliation for a CIA plot against his life that was in progress at the time of the Nov. 22, 1963 slaying.

Sen. Richard Schweiker, R-Pa., who headed the committee's investigation, was quoted by the Associated Press as saying other "interesting leads" had been left out of the 106-page report in order not to jeopardize further investigation.

HE ACCUSED THE CIA and FBI of a "coverup," and said there "is no longer any reason to have faith in (the Warren Commission's) picture of the Kennedy assassination."



But Committee Chairman Frank Church, D-Idaho, said that "whether there was a conscious coverup or not has not yet been determined."

Also to be considered in the call for a new probe is the story from ABC News Commentator Howard K. Smith that President Johnson once said to him in private:

"I'll tell you something that will rock you . . . Kennedy was trying to get to Castro, but Castro got to him first."

If you recall, President Johnson — who died in 1973 — told CBS anchorman Walter Cronkite in September of 1969, "I can't honestly say that I've ever been completely relieved of the fact that there might have been international connections" in the death. At LBJ's request, CBS did not broadcast that portion of the interview.

Now is the time for people to come forward with fresh information.

Now is the time for the committee to open trails that have been closed for nearly 13 years

According to Scripps-Howard writer Carl West, still another lead came four years after the assassination when a Washington lawyer, volunteered to the FBI that he had clients who had been hired by the U.S. government to assassinate Castro and knew of the Cuban's plans to retaliate.

He said the FBI, at LBJ's request, interviewed the lawyer who is not identified and who said he could not reveal his clients because of the attorney-client relationship. But according to a memo on the FBI interview, the lawyer said:

- His clients were "on the fringe of the underworld," and hired by the government to assassinate Castro, but the plot failed when the premier discovered it.

"By pressuring captured subjects, he (Castro) was able to learn the full details of the plot against him and decided 'if that was the way President Kennedy wanted it, he too could engage in the same tactics,' " the report said.

- Castro subsequently dispatched teams to the U.S. to kill the President, the lawyer said under oath, claiming his clients can identify two who were on these teams. He said these counter-assassins were living in New Jersey in 1967.

THE MEMO WAS transmitted to the White House, but there was no further word, the report said.

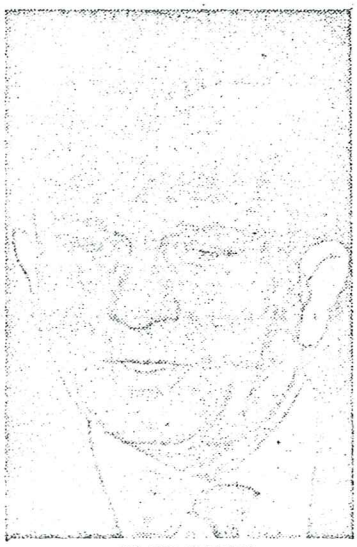
"Had the interviewing agents known of the CIA-underworld plots against Castro, they would have been aware that the lawyer had clients who had been active in the assassination plots," the report said.

But above everything else, one thing sticks out in my mind. Dist. Atty. Henry Wade of Dallas, who prosecuted Jack Ruby, told me in the mid-1960s: "Someone might have encouraged or aided Oswald because the assassination seemed a little complicated for Oswald to figure out alone." Ruby killed Oswald on Nov. 24, 1963.

Ruby was known both by the

underworld — and by high-ranking people in Cuba.

Certainly, there is enough "significant" information and new evidence available to warrant a full-scale followup probe — even 13 years later.



JACK RUBY
Known in Cuba